



Darwin – Jamie Houldsworth

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Speakers: Jamie Houldsworth

Jamie Houldsworth: My name is Jamie Houldsworth, and I'm representing myself.

Hon. Justice

Rachel Pepper: Thank you.

Jamie Houldsworth: I would like to take this opportunity to thank the panel, to allow me to make this presentation here today. What I would like to do here now, is actually change the mindset of the ways of thinking on the way of looking at this and look at it from a community point of view.

What are the benefits for the community? So, I would ask you all to ask yourself what the benefits are. Dr Ritchie, you said in the last presentation, that employment is one of them and employment is one of the major pusher. Is that really a benefit to local community or to FIFO; interstate people coming in, living in camps, not putting any money into local economy. So, some of the things you might have come up with, employment, training opportunities, economic growth for local community.

Well, these are all very good reasons, and I would agree they are good reasons, but does this really benefit the local community? Let's have a look at one of the biggest projects at the moment. In Australia, and in the Southern Hemisphere, the INPEX Project, here in Darwin. At the moment, we have 9,000 people employed out there. Although 9,000, there is only 28% of locals, and are the true locals? The reason I ask are they true locals: a lot of them have changed addresses, their territory addresses, so they could get jobs as locals. Training opportunities, yes there was a lot of training opportunities in the beginning out at INPEX, a lot of training opportunities. Try to get an apprentice on there now, try to get a traineeship out there now, there are no training opportunities. That project is going to be an ongoing, running over the next 50 years. There's still no training for local people. There is still nothing put in writing to guarantee that locals are going to get training over the next 50 years of the operation of that plant.

And then we move onto, we move onto the camps. There are a total of five camps and various hotels within the Darwin region that actually host about six and a half thousands of these non-locals that are employed at INPEX. Majority of which get bused to site. So, let's have a look at their day: up



about 4:30ish, get on the bus about 5:30ish, get back home. Do they work out on site, in jail, as I like to call it, because you can't get offsite, you're onsite, you're locked in there. And then get back on the bus, get home about 6:00ish. So, that's about fourteen hours, you're looking at fourteen hours already and then to have dinner. So, are you going to go to the local restaurant? Are you going to somewhere like that? No. You are going to go to the camp mess, the camp mess where you don't have to leave camp. Everything that you can need is on camp. From the ability to buy alcohol, the ability to eat, drink, go to a gym, play tennis, whatever you want, all of that is already on camp. So, where is the benefit for local community there?

So, then that leaves you two hours, let's say you sleep eight hours, that leaves you two hours to go and do those duties, or go and do those extracurricular activities you might have and then move on. Once again, still not socialising with the local community. All you have to do is drive or walk down to Smith Street Mall. Smith Street Mall, a lot of shops are closing, a lot of businesses, good business, local businesses, are closing. And in the middle we've got 9,000 people that are apparently going to support the local economy or were supposed to support the local economy. Business are closing their doors as we speak, because they are not being supported. Drive through Winnellie, all the business, all the commercial businesses are actually closing up, moving on, moving out. This is not their jobs here, anymore.

Not to mention we go on the rosters. It's been mentioned a couple times at rosters. The rosters add an INPEX of four and one. The saying is, four and one brings family undone. Now that is when one partner is working out there for four weeks, one week off. There's that stress of being away from the family, that family support network and the mental implications that would give. So, on that note I'm going to ask the panel to think outside the box, when you're making your decision. Do not succumb to government pressures. Do not succumb to big businesses, or gas businesses that want this for whatever reasons that they have. But it is not for the benefit of the local communities. If anyone believes that the pipeline is for the benefit of the local communities, they are pulling the wool over your eyes. It is not what it is about. So, do not succumb to the government pressure, the big businesses or what they have to offer you. I would like you all to base your recommendations on what is in the best interest of the territorians and the local community. And that's it, thank you.

Hon. Justice
Rachel Pepper:

Thank you very much, Mr. Houldsworth. Have you had some personal involvement with INPEX, have you been working there or -

Jamie Houldsworth:

I'm not, but I know people who have, I know a lot of people who do, and I know a lot of people who have had families destroyed from working on major projects, yes.

Hon. Justice
Rachel Pepper:

I understand that. I just need you to correct one thing that you said about ... I believe your words were about 'making the decision'. I am not sure or not if you are referring to the lifting of the moratorium, but if you were, that's a government decision; that's not our decision.



Jamie Houldsworth: I'm making the recommendation -

Hon. Justice

Rachel Pepper: Thank you, Sir. I just wanted to clarify that. Does anyone have any questions for Mr. Houldsworth? Yes, Dr. Jones.

Dr David Jones: Your last comments were directed towards the gas pipeline, you left it to a very short part of your presentation, but what is your ... I guess evidence, for saying that the gas pipeline is not what it appears in terms of local prospects? I think that's really ... am I now putting words in your mouth or reading between the lines?

Jamie Houldsworth: Well you can look at CSG over in the Surat Basin. Now over there, once again, they were camps that were built, that people were flew in from Brisbane to build those pipelines, to build the powerlines, to build all the infrastructure. So therefore, based on historic align of any major projects, the majority of it's FIFO, so therefore FIFO work is not benefiting the local community and is not giving employment to locals.

Hon. Justice

Rachel Pepper: Yes, Professor Hart

Professor

Barry Hart AM: Could I just bring it back to the positive. You made a good case there for ... not putting enough backing to the community. So, let me put it back ... cause you are imploring us, recommending that we take much more notice of what are the benefits locally, so what should we take into consideration? What recommendations, requirements, legislation, whatever ... to make that better.

Jamie Houldsworth: Well, it will have to be stuff along the lines of buying local, supporting locals, they would have to be a percentage of your employment force and not a small percentage, quite a large percentage that would have to be actual locals.

Professor

Barry Hart AM: A requirement?

Jamie Houldsworth: A requirement, yeah. And I would also say that another requirement would be indigenous employment and a large percentage of indigenous employment and the chiming opportunities that come along with those benefits.

Professor

Barry Hart AM: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Hon. Justice

Rachel Pepper: Yes, Dr. Jones?



- Dr David Jones: Do you have any indication of what the ongoing workforce would be at the INPEX plant when it actually gets running, because certainly we've seen billion dollar plants and gas fields that are run by two people.
- Jamie Houldsworth: They're talking about 500 people on a 24-rotating roster.
- Hon. Justice Rachel Pepper: Any further questions - Yes, Dr. Anderson.
- Dr Alan Anderson: Yeah, thanks for your presentation. I'm just trying to think of what a FIFO might look like in say Beetaloo? That's if the government wins the moratorium and that's where it happens ... you've got existing little towns like Daly Waters and Elliot. What would be your recommendation, in terms of providing labour force? Would it be to develop those towns so truly local or would it be more to develop Katherine, Tennent Creek and have them the FIFO? What are your thoughts there?
- Jamie Houldsworth: Well, a little bit put on the spot, but I suppose the thing would be about sustainability. Wherever you look, wherever you build, or wherever the infrastructure is, can it be maintained and will it be used in the future after the construction is done? One of the ones is Darwin LNG, when it was built in the mid-90s. It's currently now getting built into a shopping centre, but it sat vacant for years, old infrastructure was still left there ... not anything left at the camp. They'll say that when we had a big bit of land that we had all the infrastructure that was there that then wasn't used. As soon a Darwin LNG finished the -- plant was up and running it wasn't used anymore, it was just a ghost. So, the building wherever it's going to be used in the best interest of the community in the future.
- Hon. Justice Rachel Pepper: Yes Ms. Coram
- Ms Jane Coram: Thank you for your presentation. I was very interested to hear about the absence of local benefits to the community, but in our submissions, we've also heard a lot about the potential negative impacts on the community associated with the FIFO workforce; increased levels of crime, drugs, prostitution, those sorts of things. Do you see any of that associated with the FIFO workforce for INPEX?
- Jamie Houldsworth: I suppose my answer to that would be not that I am aware of. What my answer today would be is the fact is as decided if you're fourteen hours and you got to get up and go to work the next day, where are you going to get the time? Where are you going to get the time to actually go out and do anything else. Where are you going to get the time to actually support local community?
- Ms Jane Coram: Thank you.
- Hon. Justice Rachel Pepper: Sorry. Dr. Ritchie



Dr David Ritchie: Mr. Houldsworth, those of us who live here, we know that this whole economy has been bust, so we're kinda used to it, so when this waterfront's been built there's always people coming in from outside, the government contracts usually have a like our content component so there are some benefits from it, even if a lot of people are coming in from another town. But what I gather from your submission is that it's not that we just don't get benefits from this, but that there is actually sort of a social harm that comes from these industries. If you were here for the previous presentation that the idea of having the first thing is that you make sure that there is no harm to a community before you then start looking at enhancements. Is that pretty much what you are saying, that it's not just that we don't get a benefit from it, but that we can actually do ourselves harm from this, there's a negative -

Jamie Houldsworth: Yes, there is definitely a huge negative.

Dr David Ritchie: Okay, and would you just ... this is very valuable to us because your experience is personal and from your friends and peers that are out in this. How do you see ... how has it manifested in your experience, in your sort of social network; how's the harm sort of?

Jamie Houldsworth: Well, as far as a little of the harm, a lot of it's from the rosters, the time away, the time away from ... and you can negate that by actually using locals. So why should using a local work more ... an actual proper localised workforce, not a fake localised workforce. You're actually negating a lot of those issues because they're going to be home every day, they're going to be home every night, so therefore you're negating the fact that they're away from families for long periods of time, that they've got a spouse that is trying to raise their children, or raise their family, in what is normally a two parents household that is now a single parent household because one partner is away for a length, periods of time.

Hon. Justice
Rachel Pepper: Dr. Smith

Dr Ross Smith: Thank you very much for viewpoints and that the discussion about, particularly FIFO workforces, and positives and negatives and that's very much how the resource industry tends to be structured these days, but that wasn't always the case. And in the history of resource industries in Australia, localised resource based communities were very much a tradition. Do you think there are examples where developing dedicated communities for development in the new resource industry could be net beneficial? Wouldn't you think that any large resource is going to have an overwhelming negative outcome?

Jamie Houldsworth: Probably the insight ... there's going to get negatives and positives with all the weight it goes, or whatever happens would if they, construction phases, but at the end of the day we just have to make sure the positives far outweigh the negatives and don't leave a negative impact for future generations.



Hon. Justice

Rachel Pepper: What do you see as some of those positives?

Jamie Houldsworth: Some of the positives as in?

Hon. Justice

Rachel Pepper: You said there are always going to be negatives and positives. So, what are the positives? Just generally from this industry.

Jamie Houldsworth: [crosstalk] The positives that I would look at is that if it was a localised workforce you are actually using locals. You are actually upscaling your local territories. You are actually going to bring more people to the territory to actually live. So, this is all positives, obviously, and at the end whereas your negatives are on your FIFO is when they fly in they don't spend any money, there's a raft of people they don't know that they FIFO and they've admitted to me that they haven't spent a dollar ... some of them work in scrap base, they haven't spent a dollar in any of the communities. They are on the plane, into the bus, in the camp, from camp, on to the bus, back on the plane, back in the Brisbane before they spent a dollar.

Hon. Justice

Rachel Pepper: Yes, Dr Jones.

Dr David Jones: We visited the big CSG(Coal Seam Gas) job operations last week and ... was speaking to the local councils... this looked very ... an issue. They also seemed to be two weeks on, two weeks off, and one of the local - actually told us that they should have the power in their jurisdiction to mandate the working week. They should be able to say, they should not work on a Sunday or whatever and so... That was a really empowering theme in terms of forcing a direction to the local community and also reducing the ease of the FIFO workforce. What do you think about that kind of thing. The four week one week is really punishing on people.

Jamie Houldsworth: Hmm... Yes, but the other thing you have on that they got the similar thing out there, it's a six day a week, Sunday is optional, you must have one Sunday off every fortnight. So, virtually it's not actually forced either, to have those Sundays off. It's not actually forced to actually not work those days. So, I am not sure the actual example are you using, but the question there would be what would they do on those days off, they are actually interacting with local community and actually supporting local community or they are sitting in camp doing stuff and in camps so therefor how will that benefit local community?

Dr David Jones: We didn't actually receive much information about how are they interacting with the local community. But I guess the council is trying to do as much as they could do, try and put break on this type of fractions.



Hon. Justice

Rachel Pepper:

Anyone else? ... Mr. Houldsworth, thank you very much for very informative and thought provoking presentation. It's been very much appreciated.
Thank you.

Jamie Houldsworth:

Thank you.